To: Dr Erika Paterson

From: Alexis Jensen

Date: February 23, 2016

Subject: Proposal for implementing a successful project information management system for Hopscotch: a Mobile and Web Development Company

**Introduction**

Hopscotch is a Mobile and Web Development Company with 20+ employees in Vancouver, BC.

The company develops iOS and Android mobile apps and web applications for entrepreneurs and enterprise customers. The company is comprised of 17 developers and 3 UI UX designers as well as the 2 founders who deal mainly with the clients.

**Statement of Problem**

Over the last five months, the team has grown from 5 to 20+ employees. Along with the growth of employees, comes the influx of projects. Before the growth, the company was handling 1 to 2 projects and communication during the cycle of a project was easy to manage in an organic, casual way. Now with 8+ projects and 20+ employees, deficiencies in this informal manner of communication are apparent. Some deficiencies include confusion of a project’s current state and tasks being lost or not communicated.

A good example of how the current information project management system is failing was witnessed when two designers were separately asked to do a single task; produce a wireframe for a tvOS app. By fluke, Designer B found out Designer A was also asked. And so Designer B asked Designer A to take on the task. Designer A agreed but did not write it down, so in the end, no one completed the task. This communication was all carried out verbally. Two deficiencies are apparent from this example: Two designers were asked to do the same task, resulting in an unnecessary overlap of work (if the task had been carried out by both); and because the task was assigned verbally no one kept track of anything and the task was never completed.

**Proposed Solution**

A possible solution to these deficiencies is introducing a formal project information management system. The system would allow for a more formal communication structure around the project’s life cycle. With a formal structure in place, employees will have a roadmap of when and what to communicate during a project and most importantly, where to look for project information. In addition to constructing a formal system around the problem, the report will offer a list of possible project management software; software examples include: JIRA, Taiga and Asana. The report will look into what software best complements the project information management system that materializes from the collected data.

**Scope**

To assess what is needed to implement the correct project information management system, I plan to address the following questions:

* What is the current life cycle of a project
* What is the role of each individual in that cycle
* How are people communicating with each other during a project
* What tools are people using to communicate with each other during a project
* What are the current successes and pitfalls of how people are communicating during a project
* What parts of the system broke down as the company grew
* What are the standards for project information management in other software development companies
* What tools work well for a development software company with 20+ employees

**Methods**

My primary sources will be gathered by conducting interviews with employees and the founders of Hopscotch. Employees interviewed will be people from both the design and development side of a project; in order to gather a complete understanding of how a project is implemented. Interviews will also be conducted with the founders to understand how communication is carried out with clients over the life of a project.

Secondary sources will include publications on best practices for project information management systems like John Ferguson Smart’s book, *BDD in Action: Behavior-Driven Development for the Whole Software Lifecycle* andweb articles on what types of project information management software are appropriate for companies of 20+ employees.

**My Qualifications**

As a fourth-year Computer Science student, I have taken courses on the standards of the software development process and what effective information management systems are used within the process. In addition, in my role as a Collections Manager for a museum, I created policies and procedures surrounding the donation process of artefacts and archival material. In this role, I set up communication protocols for each role in the process as well as the database which acted as a central communication hub to the process. Also having worked at Hopscotch for five months, I am familiar with the current project information management system and the roles of the company's employees.

**Conclusion**

Clearly action is needed in order to remove the deficiencies found in the unstructured, informal project information management system currently being used at Hopscotch. By addressing the areas of inquiry laid out above, I can determine what the appropriate steps are to implement the correct project information management system for the company. With your approval, I will begin my research.